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## Kazakhstan, Republic of

### Biotechnology

### Annual

### 2005

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**Report Highlights:**

Kazakhstan currently has no special legislation in place concerning the production, importation or sale of bio-engineered products. However, a 1997 internal regulation prohibits the importation of bio-engineered soybeans. In addition, other bulk commodities may be affected. There are no labeling requirements or prohibition for processed foods. The government is planning to sign the Cartagena Protocol this year and legislation is currently under development.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Annual Report  
Ankara [TU1]  
[KZ]

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**Executive Summary**

There are no laws or regulations specifically governing the production, import, or sale of agricultural biotechnology products in Kazakhstan. However, Order N 72 issued by State Plant Quarantine Inspection at November 29, 1997, prohibits imports of genetically modified soybeans to Kazakhstan. Although no other "official" bans exist, the government does not permit import of any other bio-engineered bulk commodity like corn, expressing fear that it will be illegally planted and cause unforeseen damage. Kazakhstan has not signed the Cartagena protocol, although it is expected to as early as September 2005.

**U.S. Trade**

U.S. exports to Kazakhstan decreased to \$11 million in CY 2004. Poultry and red meat accounted for over 50% of trade. However, there is increasing demand for soybeans for the feed industry. As a result of the ban on bio-engineered soybean imports, the U.S. is unable to respond to this growth in demand.

**Regulations**

There are currently no regulations in place governing the use, importation, production, or labeling of bio-engineered agriculture or food products. Kazakhstan's labeling regulations do not affect bio-engineered agriculture or food products. Although all imported food products must be labeled, there are currently no requirements that products produced using biotechnology be labeled.

Kazakhstan does not commercially produce or plant any bio-engineered crops. However, some experiments are being conducted on potatoes, wheat and corn by the Research Institute for Genetics and Bioengineering. Most of these experiments funded by international organizations including the Islamic Development Bank and UNESCO.

Although there are no official regulations, in 1997, the State Plant Quarantine Inspection issued Order N 72, prohibiting imports of genetically modified soybeans to Kazakhstan. The order has never been published and cannot be obtained by the public. Although the ban specifically cites soybeans, no other bio-engineered bulk commodity is permitted into the country for fear that they will be planted and do harm to Kazakhstan's agriculture sector. Processed foods are not affected by the ban.

Kazakhstan is yet not a signatory of the Cartagena Protocol. However, the Government of Kazakhstan is preparing a "National Framework Document on Biosafety" funded by the Global Ecological Fund. The project began in January 2003 and was completed in June 2004. The National Coordination Board on biosafety was established under the project and it includes representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Economy. The Board will provide the government with recommendations for ratification of the Cartagena protocol in September 2005. It would appear that the Board will recommend signing of the protocol. Drafts of the accompanying legislation do not, on initial inspection, appear to be trade restrictive. The legislation is more concerned with labeling, transportation, packaging and use of bio-engineered products.

**Testing**

Kazakhstan has no mechanism or equipment to test products and bases its decisions on solely on certificates issued by exporting countries.

**Aarhus Convention**

Members of the Aarhus Convention including some 40 countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia held a conference from May 25-27 in Almaty. At the conclusion of the conference, the participants ratified an amendment to the UN Convention regarding "Access to information, public participation in the decision-making process and access to

justice in issues related with environment". The amendment, which relates specifically, to access to information on GMO products will come into force 90 days after ratification by members. Kazakhstan signed the Orhus Convention in 1998 along with 37 other countries. The convention came into the force on Oct 30, 2001. The original convention dealt solely with the environment.

**Public Perception**

Kazakhstanis have a mostly negative perception of biotechnology due primarily to a lack of information. Over the past 3 years, the local press published about 35 articles about biotechnology in food or agriculture production. Almost all of these articles were negative. According to a poll conducted by the Fund for Integration of Ecological Culture, about 95% of consumers in Kazakhstan would like GMO products to be labeled. About 35 percent of respondents would not buy products made with GMOs and most of the respondents would like to know more about biotechnology.